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This alluvial soil and the presence of the lime, but especially the lime, should make one a little slow in doubting the figures given by so careful an observer as Herodotus.

Recently I was in a farming district where lime sifted into the soil from the smoke of nearby plants which manufactured cement, and the fields seemed many fold more productive than the adjoining fields to which the lime did not come. I was told that these fields now produce five times as great harvests as they did before the lime-distributing factories were built. Since visiting this particular region I have studied similar fields and find in every case similar results.

The value of lime to the soil depends largely on the soil itself; the richer the soil, the greater the value. The deep alluvial soil of Mesopotamia is just the proper substance to absorb and to profit from such a high mixture of fertilizing lime.

Now that Babylonia has again come under the control of enlightened and progressive peoples, we can confidently expect the near future either to prove or disprove all that has been written about this fertile soil.

It almost staggers one to think what the immediate future must have in store for a region containing nearly 20,000,000 acres of rich alluvial soil, compounded with 15 per cent of lime, capable of yielding two harvests per year, whose rivers furnish sufficient water for the necessary irrigation.

The fact that there is so much lime in the soil makes probable to me the statement of Herodotus, a statement which otherwise would seem unreasonable.

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#### CENAT ADULTERIA IN SUETONIUS

Suetonius *Aug.* 70 cites a lampoon directed against a notorious dinner said to have been given by Augustus. One couplet reads as follows:

impia dum Phoebi Caesar mendacia ludit,  
dum nova divisorum cenat adulteria.

The last line is thus rendered in the Westcott and Rankin edition: "While he feasts on novel debaucheries of the gods"; and the following remark appended, "a use of *cenare* possibly without parallel."

To me the words convey no such idea, though the ordinary construction of *cenare* with an accusative would admit this interpretation.

Professor Rolfe in his translation (Loeb Classical Library) renders: "and feasts amid novel debaucheries of the gods," which, if it does not convey the meaning of the Latin, has the merit of simplicity.

Shuckburg has the following note: "*cenat adulteria*: 'represents novel debaucheries in his banquet.' The accusative with *cenare* is common in poetry

and post-Augustan prose, but this is a bold extension of meaning. *Cenabis  
hodie magnum malum* (Plaut. *Asin.* v. 2. 86) quoted in illustration is hardly parallel."

Shuckburg's translation conveys the proper meaning and his subsequent remark is to a certain degree true, but it arouses the suspicion that the peculiar flavor of the word *cenat* as here used has escaped him.

I suggest the following explanation. The author of the lampoon does not say, as he does in the preceding line, that Augustus "plays (*ludit*) the rôle of novel debaucheries of the gods" nor does he say that Augustus "dances" (*saltat*, i.e., plays in pantomime; cf. Hor. i. 5. 62, *pastorem saltaret uti Cycopa*), but that he "dines (*cenat*) the rôle," i.e., gives a dinner representing the debaucheries of the gods. In other words, there is a play upon the use of the word *cenat*, and it is entirely immaterial whether *cenat* is found elsewhere with the accusative or not.

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